

# CITY of TORRANCE VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER



## VOLUNTEER NEWS

### Disaster Response Ready to Roll



**While** most of us don't like to think about natural disasters or other emergencies, there's a group of dedicated volunteers who focus on just that: the City of Torrance Disaster Service Volunteers.

The City's **Disaster Service Volunteers** are comprised of the Animal Disaster Team (ADT) Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), and Torrance Amateur Radio Association (TARA).

Recently, thanks to a generous donation from the Dr. N. Roy Easton PhD, and the Easton Family Foundation, the City of Torrance Disaster Service Volunteers will be getting a disaster response trailer, which will have outside lighting, an awning and generators to help serve as an extra resource in case of emergencies. The Disaster Response trailer will be equipped with the tools and supplies needed by the Disaster Service Volunteers to assist Torrance Police and Fire Fighters in emergency situations. Items available for the volunteers will include:



**For the Animal Disaster Team:** kennels, leashes, playpens, water and food bowls, as well as other supplies necessary to help Torrance residents keep their animals safe.

**For the Community Emergency Response Team:** first aid supplies, cribbing material, fire extinguishers, lighting, and extra Personal Protection Equipment for CERT members.

**For the Torrance Amateur Radio:** a movable, fully equipped rack of communication equipment that will accommodate two operators. Except for the necessary antennas mounted outside, the unit will be completely self-contained to provide wide area emergency communications.

The Disaster Service volunteers will be able to bring the Disaster Response Trailer to any Torrance neighborhood to provide emergency assistance.

*"Something that has always puzzled me all my life is why, when I am in special need of help, the good deed is usually done by somebody on whom I have no claim."*  
~William Feather



## Volunteer Opportunities

### We Need Volunteers For The Following Programs:

**Words on Wheels, Torrance Public Library** – The Words on Wheels (WOW) Program brings library books and other materials to homebound patrons. The Torrance Public Library will match volunteers with one or more community members and issue the volunteer a WOW library card. The WOW volunteer will find out the specific interests of his/her partner and arrange a regular pick-up and delivery time..

To sign up, or for more information, please contact the Words on Wheels Coordinator at (310) 618-5950.

**Torrance Art Museum (TAM)** – TAM is looking for volunteers to staff the front desk, to serve as readers for the Stories in Art Program, which is a joint program with Torrance Public Library, and to assist with database entry and other administrative tasks. For more information or to volunteer, please contact TAM Volunteer Coordinator Regina Taylor at (310) 781-7163 or Cultural Services Supervisor Janene Ferguson at (310) 618-2326.



## Events of Interest

To find out more about these events and for events not listed, check out the City's event calendar at  
<http://www.torrcnet.com/events/webevent.plx?callID=2020;cmd=listday>

**City of Torrance 2nd Annual Environmental Fair** –  
March 27, 2010

**National Volunteer Week** –  
April 18-24, 2010





*"The purpose of life is not to be happy - but to matter, to be productive, to be useful, to have it make some difference that you have lived at all."*  
~Leo Rosten

## Volunteer Spotlight

### Torrance Transit Senior Ambassadors Volunteer Program

Looking for a way to help Torrance seniors increase their mobility and quality of life, Torrance Transit started the Transit Senior Ambassador program in 2007. The program, enables the City to recruit and train seniors to serve as "ambassadors" who educate fellow seniors in the community about the Torrance Transit system.

Presently, seniors make up a very small percentage of transit riders; many seniors never use public transportation and do not take advantage of this vital service offered by the City. That's where the Transit Ambassadors can help. They teach all about the "do's and don'ts" of public transit. Specifically, they provide information on each route and its points of interest, bus stops, and connections, use of fare boxes, route maps, safety and accessibility.



Enthusiastic Transit Ambassadors Edith Stieglitz and Howard Rothenberg clearly enjoy their work. As Edith says, "The goal is to get seniors who don't have transportation to use the bus. I like it because people are amazed that it's only 25 cents for seniors and they can get from here to there on one bus and there's no transfer necessary. One bus will take you all the way to downtown LA and back."

Edith became involved through one of the program's special trips. "They had a bus trip and I went on it and I thought, 'I can do that.'" So she signed up and became an Ambassador.

Howard Rothenberg now uses the bus to get everywhere. "I got involved at Herma Tillim Senior Center since I go there a lot and it's near my house. They came by and gave us free goodies to promote the program to encourage us to do everything by bus," says Rothenberg who is part of the original dozen Transit Ambassadors.

Many of Rothenberg's friends at the Tillim Center now use the bus thanks to his encouragement, "I tell them how safe it is, how easy and give them maps on how to get where they are going." He adds that being involved in Transit Ambassadors program is a great way to meet other seniors and to get to know the city more while helping others remain independent and mobile.

Ambassadors reach out to prospective patrons by organizing free trips to various locations served by Torrance Transit Routes. For example, a recent trip to Long Beach using Torrance Transit Line 3 allowed riders to visit the Aquarium of the Pacific, explore The Queen Mary and shop in Shoreline Village.

Transit Ambassador Program Coordinator Donna Baranowski sees this program as a valuable service provided to the community by the City of Torrance. As such, she happily enjoys her role as coordinator saying, "It really is something that's rewarding, helping seniors get out and be independent without a car."

Transit Administration Manager Jim Mills expressed the importance of Transit Ambassadors to the City because of their effectiveness - seniors are communicating with their peers. According to Mills, "We wanted to open up more opportunities for seniors and with seniors helping seniors, they are really our voice." Mills says the Transit Department is very happy with the volunteers currently serving as Transit Ambassadors: "I know when I've got something good, they are the best."

For more information about the program, or to sign up as a Transit Ambassador, contact Donna Baranowski at (310) 618-6240.





# Volunteer Spotlight

*"Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot,  
nothing is going to get better. It's not."  
~Dr. Seuss*

## Friends of the Torrance Library

Established in 1967, the Friends of the Torrance Library (Friends) is one of the oldest volunteer organizations in the city of Torrance. The Friends originally mobilized to encourage the passage of a bond measure to create an independent Torrance Library System. After the bond measure passed, the Friends continued to build programs that would, in the words of Friend President Helen Ball, "make a fine library system."

Forty-two years later, the Friends continue to fund unique programs that fall outside of the City's Library operating budget to help enhance its offerings. According to Friend President Ball, "We provide extra services for the patrons and the community—that's our mission statement." For example, the Friends support the library's anime and magna collections, youth programs such as Homework Helpers, and adult programming. The organization also assists with purchases of audio-visual equipment at libraries. Most recently, the Friends provided funding for the acquisition of new desks at the newly refurbished branch libraries. "We pay for fringes, not the basic things, but unique things, things the library doesn't have budget for, that's what we focus on," says Ball.

To fulfill its mission of supporting these programs and acquisitions, the Friends of the Torrance Library has grown into one of the most successful fundraisers of any group in the Torrance. "As an organization, the Friends have to have a way to make money; that's the purpose of the group and we do it in a way that's different than the foundation," says Helen Ball. Last year, the organization used a variety of fundraisers, bringing \$120,000 to the Torrance Public Library with \$40,000 coming from internet sales. Other major fundraisers include the annual used book sales and ongoing shelf sales.

For other organizations hoping to replicate the organization's success, Ball says that adaptability is the key to success. According to her, "You have to adapt to your situation and usually people don't; they resist change so that it keeps them stagnant. Adding internet sales is one example. The internet has certainly increased our income, since we now know the value of the items and get the true value of books." Ball says the group has also adapted their volunteer program as well, "We have new training now, we never had it before and we are working to see that volunteers get trained to integrate new ideas and processes."

In addition to their renown for successful fundraising, the Friends are also known as energetic and active workers. Volunteers maintain and stock the ongoing sales shelf. They sort, price books, and box books. "It's a physical job, except for working on the Internet, we don't sit down," says Ball who also states that it's a great place for these high energy volunteers to meet others who are dedicated to supporting the Library's mission. Ball shares, "We do a lot of socializing, on Tuesday mornings, we have coffee and cookies and we get to socialize with each other."

If you are interested in volunteering with the Friends of the Torrance Library, contact Helen Ball at (310) 375-2693. And don't miss the Friends upcoming paperback sale on January 16th and the hardback sale that will be held on the last weekend in April.

## Spotlight on Helen Ball

Helen Ball has been president of the Friends of the Torrance Library since 1996, but has been a friend since 1986. She joined after retiring and with the encouragement from one of her friends. According to Ball, it also didn't hurt that the Friends deal with books, saying "I love books, almost anything would have worked."

Ball started coming in on Tuesdays and gradually got acquainted with the group until one retiring vice-president asked her to perform the role upon her retirement. Since then, Ball's time volunteering with the Friends has increased significantly. She now spends between twelve and twenty hours a week, especially during books sales, which takes nine hours between set-up and sales hours.

Aside from books, her other interests are anything food and food history related. Not surprisingly, Helen Ball has a vast collection of cookbooks. She also likes to travel and is looking forward to a long vacation this spring to see the Passion Play and a river cruise to Bucharest.

Ball believes that volunteering is not only good for the organization receiving assistance, but also benefits the volunteer. Rooted in this belief, she encourages others to "Consider volunteering in our group or any other group. Consider the value of meeting new people, social interaction is more valuable to our group than anything else."







## Volunteer's Q & A

*This section is intended to provide answers to questions asked by our volunteers. Please send your questions to [LLOhnes@TorranceCA.Gov](mailto:LLOhnes@TorranceCA.Gov) and we'll do our best to provide answers. For this issue, Emergency Services Coordinator Tracy Bonano has provided information on questions related to volunteering during a disaster.*

### **In the event of a natural disaster, how can I volunteer my services to the City?**

Los Angeles County operates Emergency Volunteer Centers (EVC) throughout the County for all kinds of volunteers, including convergent volunteers (those people who "converge" during a disaster and want to help). The EVC for Torrance is administered at the Volunteer Center - South Bay, Harbor, Long Beach, located at 1230 Cravens Avenue in downtown Torrance. Prospective volunteers can contact the EVC directly by calling (310) 212-5009. City of Torrance Libraries, also known as Area Disaster Centers (ADC), allow for the congregation of volunteers registered with the Torrance Emergency Services Division, which is charged with administering the Certified Emergency Response Team (CERT), Animal Disaster (ADT) and Torrance Amateur Radio Association (TARA).

### **Can you tell me more about the Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT), Animal Disaster Team (ADT) and Torrance Amateur Radio Association (TARA) programs?**

CERT trains community members in disaster preparedness and provides basic disaster response skills. CERT members also support the community by participating in emergency preparedness projects. ADT members provide care and sheltering of animals affected by disasters. TARA members provide emergency communications during a major outage by utilizing licensed ham operators stationed throughout the Community. TARA helps get vital information to the first responders during an emergency.

### **I am a medical professional with special skills, how can I ensure that my services are best utilized during a disaster?**

Emergency Volunteers Center staff can make that determination or if a person wants to join and officially become part of CERT, TARA or ADT, one needs to fill out an application and specify the unique skills on the application. Usually, volunteers are questioned as to the skills they can offer and depending on the emergency, volunteers are assigned where they are needed most.

### **What sorts of duties do disaster volunteers perform?**

The duties vary depending on the emergency, the volunteer's registration and/or certification as well as the physical and mental status of the volunteer. Volunteers can be assigned to disaster clean-up, search and rescue, community damage surveys, volunteer incident command, answering phones, running message between emergency centers, among other tasks.

### **How can I find out more about volunteering with Emergency Preparedness functions such as Animal Disaster Team (ADT), Torrance Amateur Radio Association (TARA) or Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)?**

Contact the City's Emergency Services Coordinator **Tracy Bonano** at (310) 618-5670 or via email at [TBonano@TorranceCA.Gov](mailto:TBonano@TorranceCA.Gov). You may also visit [www.TorranceCA.Gov/DSV.htm](http://www.TorranceCA.Gov/DSV.htm).



## About Your City Government

**The Torrance City Council recently created two new committees to help prepare for some upcoming events: The 2010 Census and Torrance's Centennial Celebration.**

### **2010 Census Complete Count Committee**

The U.S. Constitution (Article 1, Section 2) mandates that a census be performed every 10 years. To accomplish this enormous task, the U.S. Census bureau relies on partnerships with local government to generate public awareness regarding the Census. The City of Torrance is one such partner of the U.S. Census bureau and recently formed the 2010 Complete Count Census Committee.

"Part of the mandate is to be the face and voice of the community," says Eleanor Barthe-Jones, the staff liaison to Torrance's 2010 Census Committee. As such, the Committee represents a diverse cross section of the Torrance community such as the Torrance Unified School District, the Torrance Chamber of Commerce, several homeowners' associations, and non-profit organizations. And to ensure that the "voice" of community is heard, materials are available in multiple languages including Korean, Japanese, Chinese, and Spanish.

The 2010 Census questionnaires will go out in March and are due back on April 1st. A change from the 2000 Census, the 2010 census is short. With a slogan of "10 Questions, 10 Minutes," the 2010 Census will be brief. Barthe-Jones points out that while the Census maybe short, it is very important to ensure that everyone is counted. She states, "So much is based on the census including political seats and representatives. Even in the event of a natural disaster, everything is based on the census count. That's the number they use to figure out how much money your city would get."

An important task of the Committee's outreach efforts is to dispel any myths that people may have regarding the Census. For example, the U.S. Census Bureau maintains strict confidentiality of census data and has also developed new technology to ensure that people are counted once and only once.

To complete its work, the Committee has been present at various events in the community, promoting the involvement of Torrance residents in the 2010 Census. "We've attended...the Farmers' Market, arts and crafts shows, and the Disaster Preparedness Fair. We really plan to gear up and do a lot more," states Barthe-Jones.

To learn more about the City of Torrance 2010 Census Complete Count Committee, you're welcome to attend any of their meetings. The Committee meets on the 4th Thursday of the month at 3:00 p.m. at City Hall located at 3031 Torrance Boulevard. Interested parties may also call Eleanor Barthe-Jones at (310) 618-5880 for more information or visit <http://2010.census.gov/2010census/>.

### **Torrance Centennial Committee**

The City of Torrance will be celebrating its centennial in 2012! To get the party started, the Torrance City Council created the Torrance Centennial Committee. The Centennial Committee is comprised of a variety of members from different segments of the community including local business, churches, education and non-profit agencies to help plan a multitude of events celebrating the rich and diverse history of the Torrance community. While 2012 seems far away, for a milestone celebration such as the centennial, the Torrance City Council believes that early planning will result in success.

The newly formed Centennial Committee has just elected its chair and vice chair. Dr. Laurie Love, recently retired Chief Academic Officer from Torrance Unified School District will serve as chair and former Mayor Dee Hardison will serve as vice chair. The Committee has also established five sub-committees: Events, Finance, Fundraising, Marketing, and Media/PR/Outreach. The Committee will be planning a variety of fun, educational and enriching events and activities that reflect Torrance's rich history starting in January 2012 with a culmination on October 21, 2012. Of special interest, the Committee is looking to interview individuals that are knowledgeable about the City's history. As the planning goes underway, there will be plenty of opportunities for members of the community to become involved, and everyone is encouraged to do so!

Interested in participating? Attend the Centennial Committees' public meetings, which are held on the 4th Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Katy Geissert Civic Center Library Meeting Room. You may also contact Staff Liaisons Eleanor Barthe-Jones, Fran Fulton or Gesuina Parras at (310) 618-5880 or visit [www.TorranceCA.Gov/Centennial.htm](http://www.TorranceCA.Gov/Centennial.htm).

#### **CITY COUNCIL**

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